



RU ENROLMENT TARGETS 2020 – 2025

This report summarises performance and enrolment targets of Rhodes University that have been agreed following consultations with stakeholders

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1. Background

1.1. Enrolment Planning Process

In July 2018, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) requested Rhodes University to complete and submit enrolment projections in Microsoft Excel template (Tables 1 to 51e and foundation tables), for the enrolment cycle 2020 to 2025. In response to this request, the Vice Chancellor of Rhodes University requested the Director of Institutional Planning to coordinate stakeholder engagements for population of the enrolment tables.

The first meeting on enrolment planning process was held on the 3rd of August 2018. The meeting was attended by Faculty Deans, Director: Institutional Planning (IPU) and Director: Information Technology Services (ITS). At this meeting, procedures and assumptions for completion of the tables were agreed upon. A progress report was presented to the Size and Shape Committee on the 14th of September 2018.

The Director of ITS working closely with Director of IPU populated tables that are relevant to the Programme and Qualification Mix of Rhodes University.

The final enrolment projections following the enrolment planning workshop organized by DHET in November 2018 and meeting between DHET and Rhodes University delegates is approved by Council of Rhodes University at the meeting of council on the 7th of March 2018.

1.2. Link to Institutional Development Plan (IDP)

In June 2018, the council of Rhodes University approved the IDP. The IDP which spans from 2018 – 2022 coincides to an extent with the next DHET enrolment planning cycle 2020 -2025. The IDP is foregrounded in our pursuit of academic excellence and by the constitutional mandate of transformation of all public institutions in the country. As stated in the IDP, all Rhodes University plans are driven by our mission and vision and underpinned by the principles of sustainability, transformation, local relevance and global impact. The IDP has seven goals under which development objectives are respectively aligned. A substantial number of the development objectives are related to enrolment and resource viability of the Rhodes University.

The enrolment figures in the DHET enrolment planning Tables in certain instances are slightly lower than in the IDP. Our commitment to DHET with reference to IDP figures is on the basis of the lower range of the acceptable deviation from planned targets. This is articulated in view of possible penalties that follow when institutions over/under enrol outside acceptable level of residual from planned targets

2. Summary of Changes to the Draft Enrolment Plan Following Meeting with DHET

The following are institutional responses to the enquiries of DHET panel at the meeting held on the 20th of November 2018 between the representatives of Rhodes University and DHET:

No	DHET Enquiries	Rhodes University Responses
1	RU projected a conservative 1.7% total enrolment increase on average for the period 2016 to 2025. These are too conservative.	Data for 2016 presented a skewed outlook. By Inserting 2017 data, RU will be growing at the average rate of the sector (2%). Infrastructural/services challenges facing Makhanda area present real restraint to our growth aspirations.
2	RU projection of First-time entering student numbers is overly optimistic at growth rate of 5%.	We presented our admission targets which included, transferring and returning students. This has been updated with First-time entering only targets.
3	Why was there a projected postgraduate success rates decline from 2016, in particular Masters?	There was an unusual high spike in 2016 at Masters Level. The trend has to be smoothed realistically. The pattern also affects graduation rates. The projected trend is not actually declining.
4	Academic staff with PhDs is set at 54%. Why?	Academic staff with PHDs peaked in 2013 at 56%, most recent data (2017) indicate 53%. There is a strong focus on improving staff doctoral qualifications. Sabbatical Grants are granted to academic staff to complete PhDs. Recently, there is a drive through UK/RSA funding to develop proposal for projects in support of academics in attaining PhDs in collaboration with University of Venda and University of Lancaster. These are in addition to the various support activities funded through the UCDG.
5	Research output units projection was low. Why?	In view of the above, we have therefore readjusted the projection from 54% in the draft plan to 57% in the final plan. At the time of working on the draft, the baseline was informed by journal articles only. The update now includes other recognizable publications (books, conferences etc).
6	Projected RU contribution to Scarce Skills enrollment is low. Why	Our qualification mix are predominantly general formative. Students have liberty to pick and choose learning areas across CESM categories. Our projections are based on historical trend. We will review the figures at mid-term, by then we would have certainty around certain education qualifications.

7	Rhodes University should strengthen support to postgraduate students	There are various activities of Postgraduate Centre in the forms of support for writing, research design, and supervisor development courses. The works of the centre have been outstanding even with limited resourcing. The University is committed to continued support of the centre as far as available resources permit.
8	Rhodes University should write the Minister of DHET for coordinated assistance of government agencies with respect to infrastructural and service delivery challenges facing Makhanda area.	The office of the VC has been in dialogue with DHET and COGTA Ministers and the PICC regarding service delivery issues in Makhanda local municipality. Recent helpful responses from the DHET and PICC have been received.

Table 1: RU Responses to DHET Enquiries

3. Head Count Enrolments

3.1. Enrolment Context

Rhodes University is the only traditional university located in a rural area with very limited infrastructure. In planning headcount enrolment at Rhodes University, it is pertinent to consider possible impact of the student body on municipal services and available infrastructure in Grahamstown.

The guiding philosophy in planning enrolment projections at Rhodes University is anchored on striking the delicate balance in our quest for sustainability (growth and support of the National Develop Plan) and being real to certain constraints. Constraints due to our location and the growing competition for qualifying applicants are major challenges to our growth aspirations. During the enrolment planning meetings with academic leadership of the University, certain initiatives were suggested for enhancement of enrolment drive. These include, improved investment in our marketing and recruitment campaigns, improved presence in online and social media platforms and targeted marketing of our programmes and offerings.

3.2. Headcount by Level of Study

Having considered the factors explained above, headcount enrolment is planned to grow at an average annual rate of about 2% from actual headcount figure of 8077 in 2017 to about 9500 in 2025.

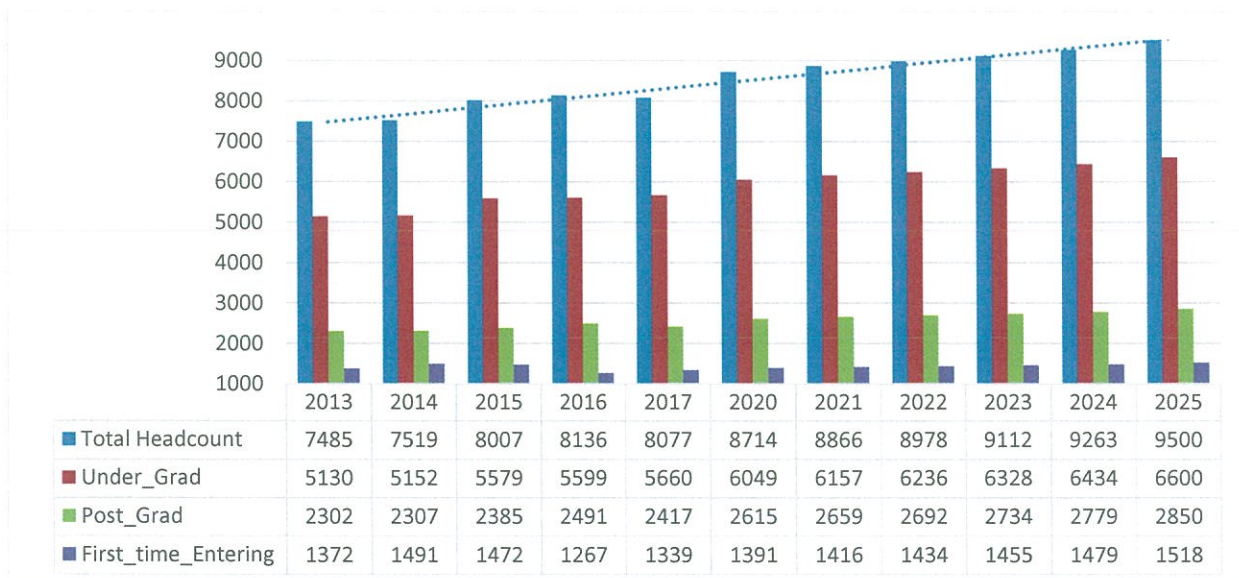


Figure 1: Head Count Enrolment Actuals (2017) & Projection 2020 - 2025

The projected increase would imply growth of first time entering student enrolment from 1339 in 2017, to about 1980 in 1518 as shown in Figure 1. Rhodes University as a research intensive University plans to maintain its relatively high proportion of postgraduate students at about 30% of total student headcount. Foundation provisioning programmes have been planned to grow by at least 10 students per programme per annum.

3.3. *Headcount by Field of Study*

In the current Institutional Development Plan of Rhodes University, a unique academic proposition is articulated for our students and stakeholders. The university commits to maintaining and strengthening its general formative degree offering and the research-teaching- community engagement nexus which enable students to access powerful knowledge. In pursuit of this, Rhodes University plans to maintain the highest proportion of its student body in the liberal arts and humanities (43% in 2025). The Sciences will account for 25% of the student population while Business/Management and Education study areas will have 18% and 14% respectively by 2025 as shown in Figure 2.

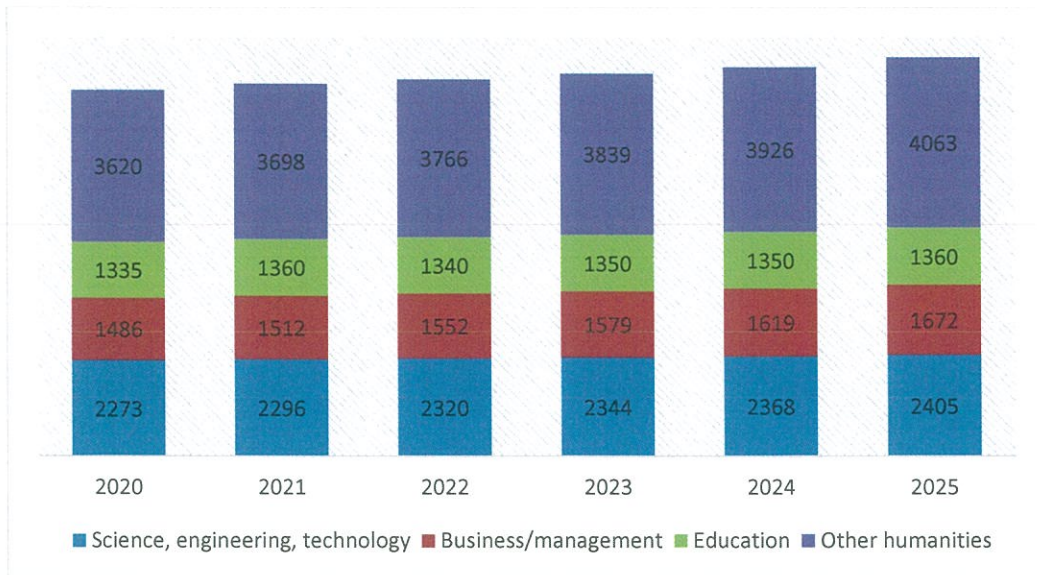


Figure 2: Head Count by Field of Study

3.4. Student Demographics

Rhodes University is largely a residential university. Currently, our residential infrastructure planning accounts for a gender parity of 41% males and 59% female. For this reason and the national quest for improved human capacity development of women, gender composition in the enrolment plan is left at 59% female and 41% male.

In terms of racialized population groups, in the recent past, the student population at Rhodes University has been transforming towards the national demographic profile of the country in terms of population groups. The IDP commits to improving the diversity of the body to reflect national demographics. To this end and following the recent trend, the African population group is planned to have the highest growth rate of about 2.5% in the next enrolment cycle. This will see African students increase from 54% of student population in 2013 to about 66% in 2025. The composition of coloured population group is planned to grow at 1.2% while that of the Indian and White population groups will grow at 0.8% and 0.3% respectively. Figure 3 provides a summary of the projected composition of the student body by population group.

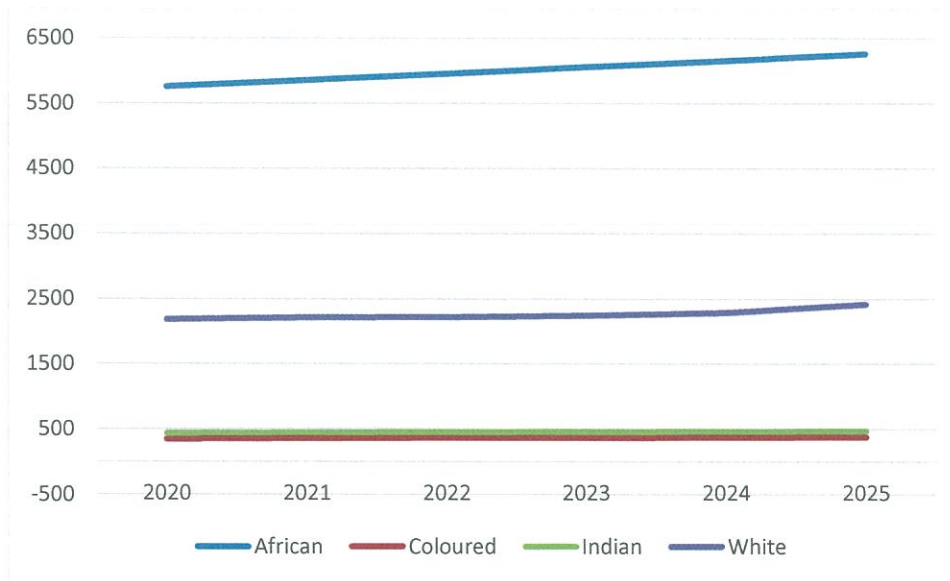


Figure 3: Student Headcount by Population Group

3.5. *New Programmes/Qualifications*

Two new programmes, the Post Graduate Diploma (Business Analysis) and Advanced Certificate in Foundation Phase teaching are approved to commence in 2019 and 2020 respectively. These programmes are already considered in the enrolment projections.

Three new qualifications; Diploma in Grade R Teaching, Advanced Diploma (Business Analysis) and Master of Arts (Organizational Psychology) are at various stages of approval. These programmes when approved may commence within the next cycle (2020 - 2025) of enrolment planning. Enrolment into these qualifications will be considered during the mid-term review of the enrolment projections.

There are currently no distance programmes but there is talk of the Advanced Diploma being distance as well as contact. If we get the final approval we will need to adjust at the midterm review of enrolment plan and put distance numbers into the plan.

4. Full-Time Equivalent Enrolments (FTE) & Student Success

With one of the best student success indicators in the sector, Rhodes University will continue to promote research-informed teaching and learning best practices. Academic development activities funded by University Capacity Development Grants in the forms of development of ‘flexible curriculum’ using extended, augmenting and fully foundational courses will be continued and enhanced. More so, embedding of support for language/reading/writing in the curriculum and

extended orientation programme are on-going. These strategies are geared towards sustaining as well as improving student experience and success at Rhodes University.

FTEs are calculated in line with the current actual ratios of headcount to FTEs using 2017 HEMIS figures. The 2017 FTE to headcount enrolment was 82%. This figure is consistent with annual trend in the recent past. Therefore the FTE ratio is kept at 82% through the planning cycle (2020 -2025). The resulting annual success rate has also been consistent at 83%. Therefore success rate is kept at 83% for the period 2020 - 2025. However, students are taking longer to complete degrees which affects the graduation rate but the success rate of the number written and the number completed has not been lower than 83% achieved in 2017. For this reason, graduation rate has been conservatively projected and kept constant at 29% in this plan.

5. Staff & Research

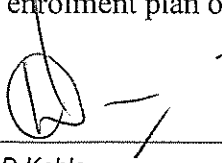
Permanent staff headcounts is projected to increase slightly in the category of instruction and research only. All other staff categories are projected at the same level as in 2017. This is necessary to reduce the staff costs. In 2017, Rhodes University recorded a total of 1309 permanent staff out of which 322 (24%) were research and instruction staff. The staffing component of research and instruction staff is projected to increase to 350 in 2025. The operating model of Rhodes University is designed around relatively small classrooms which affords our students more exposure to extensive academic writing. For viability and sustainability, there is the need to get to a more efficient FTE student to academic staff ratio above 17 in 2025 from 13.8 in 2013.

The proportion of Instruction and Research staff with PhD's projected to increase from 53% in 2017 to 57% in 2025. This projection is in the light of forecasted retirees in the system over the period which may lessen the impact of our institutional drive for professional development of academic staff.

In 2017, Rhodes University record total research output units of 1032. In this plan, total research output is projected to increase to 1390 units in 2025 at an annual growth rate of 3.8%. This projected increase is informed by our consistent advancement in scholarly publication units. More so, our research Masters and PhD graduates are set to increase on annual basis from 189 Masters graduates in 2017 to 289 in 2025, while PhD graduates will increase from 87 in 2017 to 103 in 2025. Activities of Postgraduate Centre in the forms of support for writing, research design, and supervisor development courses will be continued and enhanced.

AUTHORIZATION

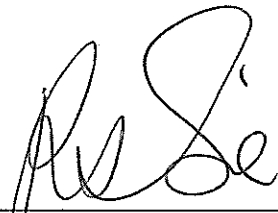
This enrolment plan of Rhodes University is authorized by:



Mr V D Kahla
Chairperson of Council
Date: 07/03/2019



Dr S Mabizela
Vice Chancellor
Date: 07/03/2019



Dr RC Nnadozie
Director: Institutional Planning
Date: 07/03/2019

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